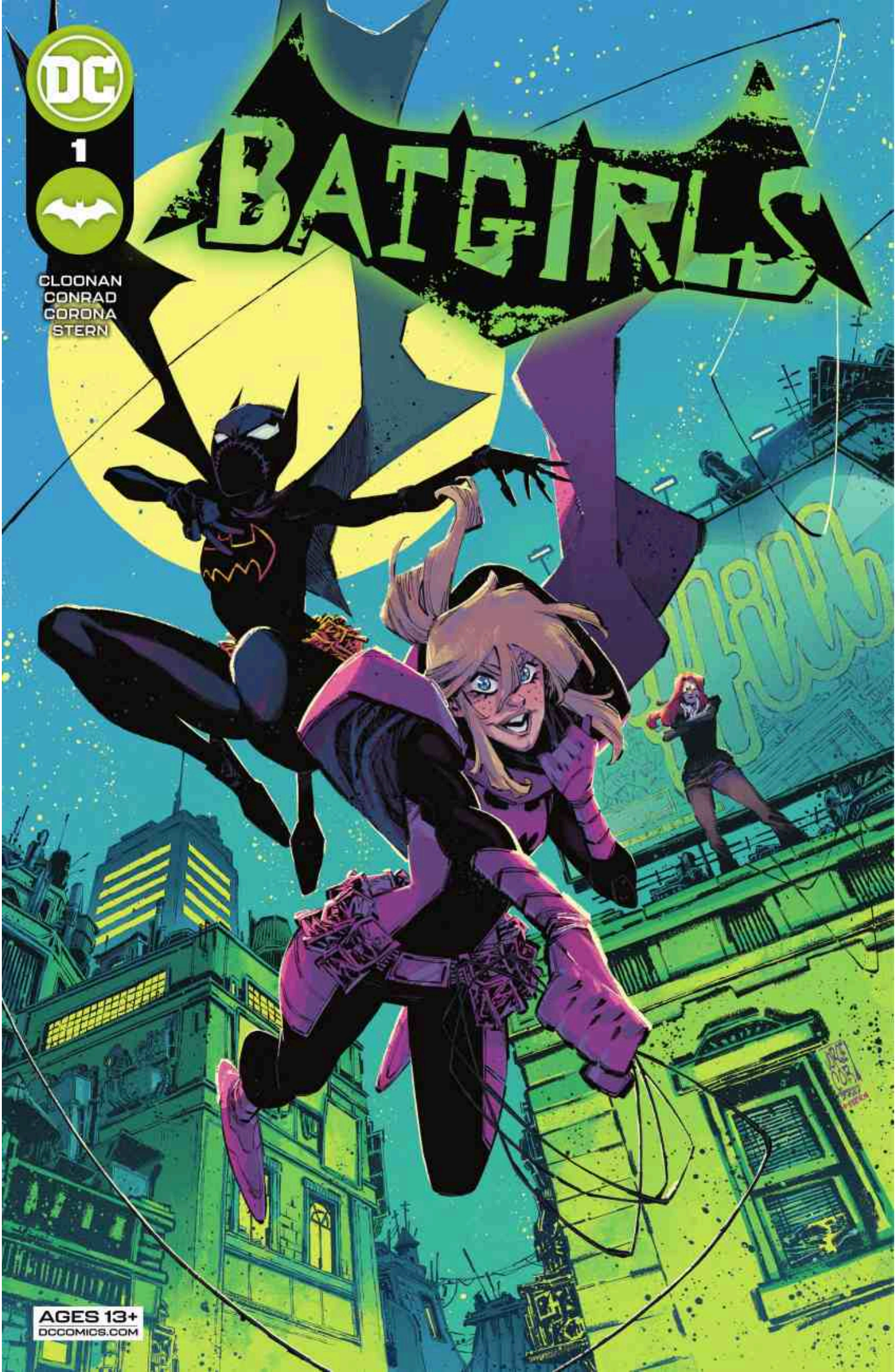
DC
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BATGIRLS
CLOONAN
CONRAD
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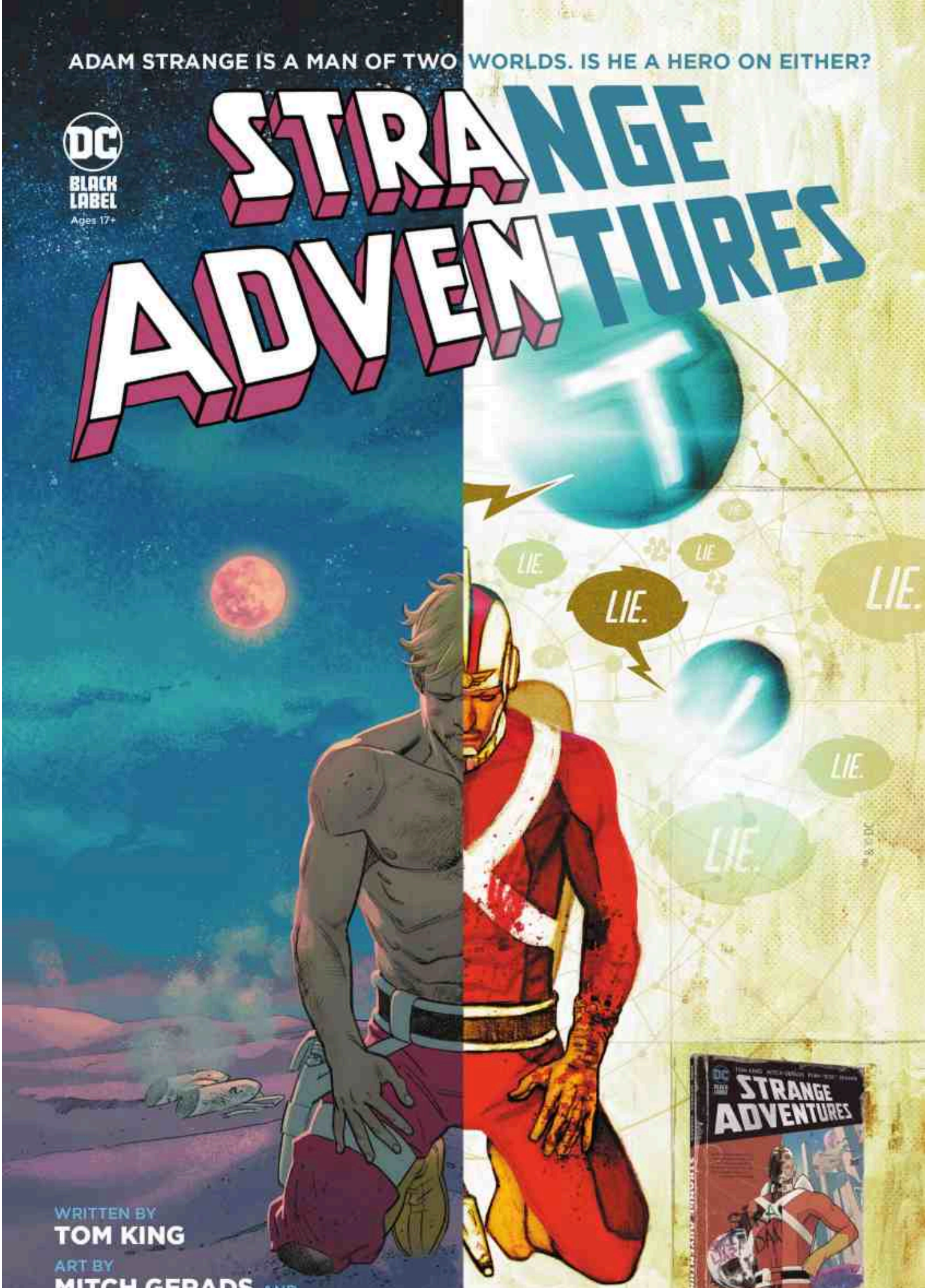
STERN
AGES 13+
DCCOMICS.COM

ADAM STRANGE IS A MAN OF TWO WORLDS. IS HE A HERO ON EITHER?

STRANGE ADVENTURES

DC BLACK LABEL
Ages 17+



WRITTEN BY
TOM KING

ART BY
MITCH GERADS AND
EVAN "DOC" SHANER

A HARDCOVER GRAPHIC NOVEL COLLECTION
OF THE EISNER AWARD-NOMINATED SERIES

DECEMBER

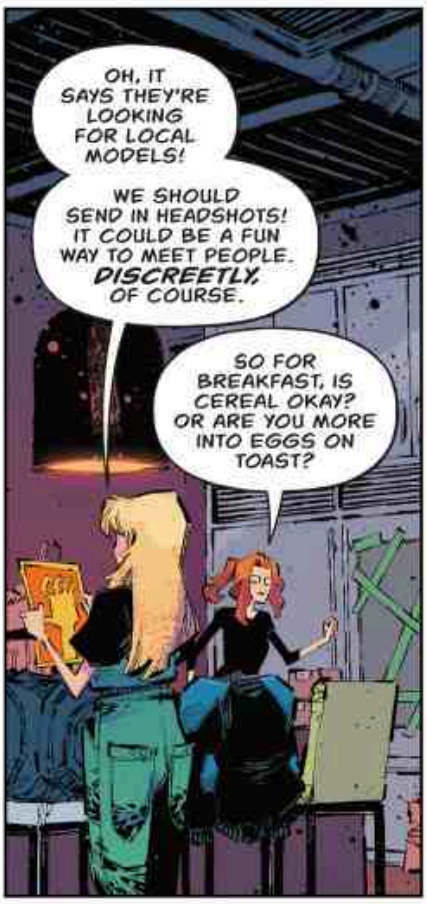
I ONCE READ THIS ARTICLE--SOMETHING FROM *SCIENCE*...THE KIND OF THING THAT NO ONE REALLY UNDERSTANDS, BUT IT'S FUN TO THINK ABOUT ANYWAY.
SNAP
IT WAS CALLED "*OBSERVER THEORY.*"
ABOUT TINY LITTLE THINGS, AND THEIR BEHAVIOR.
LIKE...IF YOU'RE LOOKING AT SOMETHING, IT MIGHT ACT DIFFERENTLY WHEN YOU DON'T LOOK AT IT.
TAKE LIGHT, FOR EXAMPLE--IT CAN BE A WAVE *OR* A PHOTON.
LOOK AWAY AND *WHO KNOWS* WHAT IT IS.
IT'S LIKE THAT CAT IN THE BOX THING...IS IT DEAD OR ALIVE?
ALMOST *INVISIBLE* THINGS. SO SMALL YOU DON'T EVEN NOTICE THEM.
THEY CAN APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR, SOMETIMES THEY CAN BE IN MORE THAN ONE PLACE... WHICH SEEMS TO DEFY LOGIC, BUT THIS IS SCIENCE STUFF.
I AM THE OBSERVER.
I AM *SEER.*
I HAVE *ALWAYS* BEEN THE LITTLE, THE OBSCURE, THE INVISIBLE.
BUT SOON... I TOO WILL BE SEEN.

The Hill, est. 1635. Population ~~11,316~~ 11,319.
Recently named *The Jewel of Gotham* by the city's Realtor Association...
HERE WE ARE!
...though Ghoul of Gotham might be more accurate.
OKAY, SO IT MIGHT NEED A LITTLE TLC...BUT FOR THE TIME BEING, IT'S OURS! WELL, THE TOP FLOOR IS, ANYWAY.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S ACTUALLY HAPPENING!
I KNOW YOU'RE EXCITED, BUT REMEMBER--THE THREE OF US **NEED** TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE.
DON'T WORRY, BABS! CASS AND I ARE THE VERY **SOULS** OF DISCRETION!
OH **ARE** YOU, NOW?
LIKE THAT TIME YOU TOOK ON AN ARMORED TANK FULL OF **MAGISTRATE** AGENTS?
This actually happened.*
IT DID, IN **BATMAN: FEAR STATE! --JESS C.
OR THAT **OTHER** TIME YOU TWO USED GRAPPLING HOOKS TO SCALE THE **CLOCK TOWER** BECAUSE YOU FORGOT YOUR KEYS?
TH-THAT WAS CASS'S IDEA!
This too. Actual footage.
MY IDEA WAS A BATTERING RAM.
OH, YEAH. HEH, I GUESS THE GRAPPLING HOOK **WAS** ME.
OKAY, I GET IT. **MORE** DISCREET THAN THAT.

Four flights of stairs later...
OH MY GOD-- BUNK BEDS! LIFE JUST GOT EVEN BETTER! DO YOU WANT TOP OR BOTTOM?
...I DUNNO.
I'LL TAKE THE TOP THEN! UNLESS YOU WANT IT?
SHRUG
OKAY, HOW ABOUT THIS--I GOT DIBS, THEN AFTER A WEEK, WE CAN SWITCH. EVERYONE SHOULD SLEEP ON THE TOP BUNK AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIFE!
...HMM.
WHAT IS IT?
OH! HE MUST BE ONE OF OUR NEW NEIGHBORS!
HIYA, NEIGHBOR! WE JUST MOVED IN NEXT DOOR--
SLAM
NEVER MIND THEN.

After five trips to the van...
HEY STEPH, IS CASS WITH YOU?
SHE HAS ONE MORE TRIP TO MAKE, THEN SHE'LL LOCK UP THE VAN.
YOU GOTTA SEE WHAT I FOUND OUTSIDE!

IT WAS ON A TELEPHONE POLE--OUR NEW NEIGHBORHOOD HAS AN ART GALLERY! HOW COOL IS THAT?
THAT IS PRETTY COOL.
SPELL BOUND!
A GROUNDBREAKING NEW ART SHOW AT THE HILL'S OWN NEW LIFE GALLERY


OH, IT SAYS THEY'RE LOOKING FOR LOCAL MODELS!
WE SHOULD SEND IN HEADSHOTS! IT COULD BE A FUN WAY TO MEET PEOPLE. DISCREETLY, OF COURSE.
SO FOR BREAKFAST, IS CEREAL OKAY? OR ARE YOU MORE INTO EGGS ON TOAST?

CEREAL. NOTHING TOO SWEET THOUGH. I THINK CASS LIKES EGGS?
I'LL PUT BOTH ON THE LIST. SPEAKING OF CASS--
I'M HERE...

...AND I LIKE EGGS.

YOU ALL RIGHT? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HEAD?
NOTHING...
THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE NOTHING.
"SO, I HAD THE FINAL BOX IN MY HANDS...
WELL, WELL, WELL...
...BUT SOME GUYS, THEY TOLD ME TO HAND IT OVER...
NEW TO THE HILL? TIME TO PAY THE MOVE-IN TAX! NOW HAND OVER THE GOODS, KID!
...THEN I REMEMBERED WHAT YOU SAID...
KEEP A LOW PROFILE...
LOW PROFILE...
LOW PROFILE...
SO YOU THREW THE FIGHT.
THEY SUSPECT NOTHING.

I'M SORRY, THAT'S AWFUL. THOSE BOZOS ARE LUCKY YOU DIDN'T THUMP 'EM! DID THEY NAB ANYTHING IMPORTANT?
SOAP. TOWEL. FAVORITE ROBE.
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING, CASS. WE HAVE EXTRA SHOWER STUFF YOU CAN USE FOR NOW.
This move was never gonna be easy...

DIDN'T LIKE IT...NOT FIGHTING THEM.
I NEED A SHOWER.
OH, I'M NEXT. I FEEL LIKE I'M COVERED IN BOX DUST!
DON'T BE TOO LONG! I'M MAKING DINNER.
...and keeping a low profile when all you want to do is rage? Even harder.

...SOOO. IS THAT BOX THING A...TV?
MORE OR LESS.
WE CAN'T RISK A SMART TV, SINCE WE DON'T KNOW THE EXTENT OF SEER'S REACH.
WELL, I DON'T THINK WE GOTTA WORRY ABOUT THAT. THIS THING IS STUPID AS HELL.

ON THE MENU TONIGHT-- CUP NOODS, CUP NOODS, OR...
...CUP NOODS. WHAT'LL IT BE, STEPH?
CUPPA nood

MMMMM. DECISIONS, DECISIONS.
NOODS IT IS!
:KSSHT: --A WAVE OF GRAFFITI MURALS APPEARING IN THE HILL HAS SPARKED DEBATE: IS IT CRIME, OR ART? MORE AT NINE.

UP NEXT: A KILLER STALKS THE STREETS! HERE ARE FIVE SIMPLE TRICKS YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES CAN DO TO STAY SAFE.
HALLORAN REPORTING LIV
Sometimes though, all you need is a hot shower.

Rinse off "that grime" from "the streets of Gotham" that Bruce is always dropping monologues about.
DONE. YOUR TURN.
WOW, THAT WAS QUICK!
HEY, I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOUR ROBE GOT TAKEN?
OH... I, UH... FOUND IT.
GOOD.
I ALMOST SUGGESTED WE FIND THE GUYS WHO TOOK IT, BUT I DOUBT BABS WOULD HAVE GONE FOR THAT!
MAYBE LATER... ENJOY YOUR SHOWER.
UNNGGHH...
Clear your head, and you'll see things with a new perspective!
OH THAT SNEAKY CASS--SHE BEAT ME TO IT!
DINNER'S READY WHEN YOU ARE, STEPH!
COMING!
WHUMP

Nighttime in the Hill. Several blocks away, local thugs, the "Hills Angels," are licking their wounds.
Which is kind of a gross thing to do, but it isn't literal.
I mean, maybe it is-- but most doctors would advise against it.
LISTEN, CASS. I SAW WHAT YOU DID TO THOSE DUDES.
I WANTED MY ROBE BACK.
NO ONE SAW.
THAT'S THE THING...I THINK MAYBE SOMEONE DID.
I PUT A BAG ON MY HEAD.
A BAG?
YES.
THIS BAG.
READING IS FUNDAMENTAL
LIKE THIS.
WOW, CASS...
...REALLY?
YEAH... WHY?
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU NEED TO KNOW...
...YOU'RE THE COOLEST.
GOODNIGHT!
...GOODNIGHT.

MORNING, BABS! SLEEP OKAY?
UGH--
--WE MADE COFFEE!
>BLURK< >COUGH< I MEAN--MMMM. REMIND ME TO UH, GIVE YOU BOTH A RAISE.
WE BARELY SLEPT. WE WERE TOO EXCITED FOR--
MORNING MEETING!
NOD NOD
PERFECT. I'VE GOT JUST THE THING TO KICK IT OFF...
WORLD'S GREATEST DAD
WALKIE-TALKIES ARE NOT IDEAL, BUT THEY ARE LOW-TECH. SEER WON'T BE ABLE TO ACCESS THEM.
THE DRAWBACK IS THEY MAKE A LOT OF NOISE, SO BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU USE THEM.
I'VE ALSO SECURED SOME BURNER PHONES.
FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY, NOT FOR SCROLLING. THEY DON'T HAVE A TON OF MINUTES, SO GO EASY ON 'EM.
WHAT ABOUT FOOD?
JUST GETTING TO THAT! WHILE I'M BUYING GROCERIES, YOU TWO WILL SET UP MY NEW ENCRYPTED GRID!
WHEN THAT'S DONE, I'LL BE SAFELY BACK ONLINE.
YOU'LL NEED TO PLACE BEACONS AT A FEW MARKED LOCATIONS. IT SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG.
NOW, I SUSPECT YOU'RE WONDERING HOW YOU'LL BE GETTING AROUND...?
JOIN ME OUTSIDE FOR THIS NEXT BIT.
I HAVE A BIG SURPRISE FOR YOU TWO!
I LOVE SURPRISES.

IT'S LIKE THEY SAY...
BAT MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVLEGES!
SHLINK
VRRR
CARBON-FIBER-REINFORCED POLYMER EXTERIOR WITH A BULLETPROOF ENGINE CASING. NIMBLE AND MODIFIED TO MAKE THEM NEARLY SILENT.
THE PERFECT SOLUTION TO GOTHAM TRAFFIC, AND FRANKLY...
...THEY'RE SUPER COOL. AM I RIGHT?
TAH-DAH!
SAD TROMBONE
UH, YEAH. THESE ARE SICK, BABS.
RIGHT THEN. I'LL LEAVE YOU TO IT!
HOLLER IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS, BUT I SUSPECT THIS WILL BE A CINCH FOR BOTH OF YOU.
THOSE... SUCK.
IT'S OKAY.
REMEMBER THE MUGGERS?
YOU DIDN'T--!
I DID.
SUIT UP.
SWIGLE

Smash cut.
The last time they were on this street, things looked very different.
WOOOO!
WHAT SHOULD WE CALL IT?! ALL GREAT CARS HAVE NAMES!
VROOOOOM
The Clock Tower had been their sanctuary and they were being blamed for its bombing. Doctored footage was all over the news.
Still is.
Honestly? Everything feels like it's hanging by a thread.
BRUCE?
HAH! BILBO?
BAO!
BOBA!
SKREEET
But you can't kill an idea...
BONDO?!
...and you can't stop the *Batgirls*.
HIT THE GAS! LET'S SEE WHAT THIS BOAT CAN DO!
BONDO! BONDO! BONDO!
VROOOOOOM

Half a gallon later while freeclimbing a skyscraper...
Oh and don't try this at home.
...unless, of course, you're a Batgirl, and you need to manually wire in an uplink for your computer genius partner-in-crime.
Wait--not crime, that's bad. In-fighting-crime.
HOW MANY MORE OF BABS'S DOODADS DO WE HAVE LEFT TO PLACE?
--KSSHT-- THEY'RE NOT DOO-DADS.
Point is, just don't do this, okay?
LAST ONE, DONE.
--KSSHT-- GOOD. THIS IS A BIG STEP TOWARD REBUILDING THE ORACLE NET-WORK.
HEAD ON HOME, BATGIRLS. GREAT JOB TODAY, OVER. --KSSHT--
DUDE...LET'S SWING DOWN THERE REAL QUICK. I SEE SOMETHING COOL!
A NEW TUTOR PIECE!
HE'S GOT WALLS UP ALL OVER THE CITY. THE GUY IS BRILLIANT! SOMETIMES, HE'LL EVEN LIVESTREAM WHILE HE PAINTS.
NOT THAT WE CAN WATCH IT ON A FLIP PHONE...
TUTOR
WOW.
YEAH! HIS STUFF IS A PERFECT MARRIAGE OF META-COMMENTARY SYMBOLISM AND POSTMODERNIST POP ART! I READ AN ARTICLE THAT SAID HE'S LIKE--
--HEY, YOU OKAY?
LOOK...

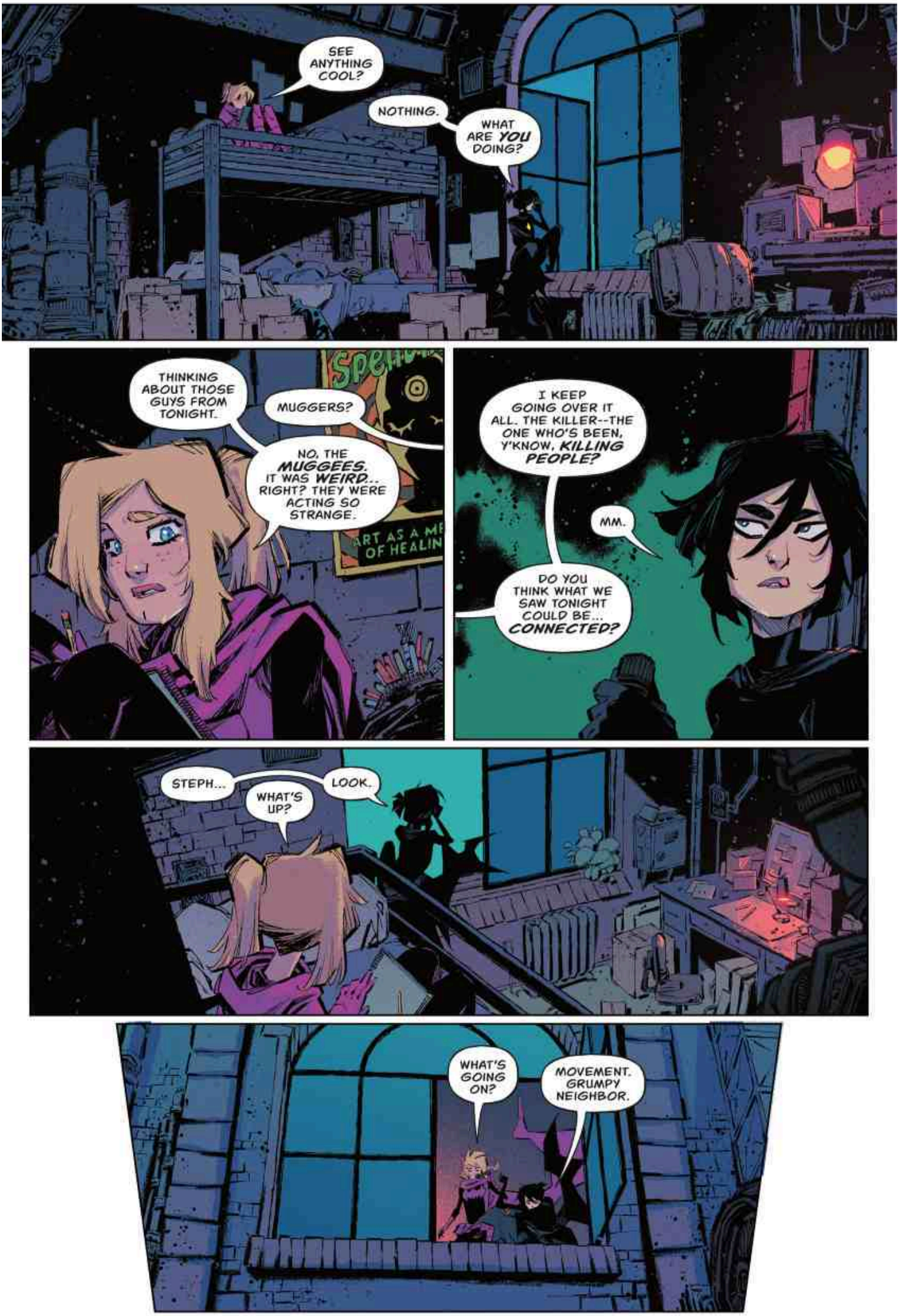
AREN'T THOSE THE GUYS YOU BEAT UP IN THE ALLEY EARLIER?
YES.
WE NEED TO STOP THEM.
YEAH. AND THERE ARE TWO OF US THIS TIME--BABS WILL UNDERSTAND.
COME ON.
IT'S THE BATGIRLS!
WHAT ARE YOU FREAKS DOIN' IN THE HILL? COME TO BLOW UP ANOTHER BUILDING?
THAT WAS A LIE!
HEARD THERE'S A BOUNTY ON THEIR PUNY HEADS. I SAY IT'S TIME TO COLLECT.
WE'D LIKE TO SEE YOU TRY.
HISS
THINK YOU CAN COME TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD AN' ACT LIKE YOU'RE--
OOF!
SCHWACK
WE'RE NOT THE ONES ROBBING PEOPLE AT GUN-POINT!
BATGIRL--HOLD UP. THERE'S SOMETHING...
...SOMETHING'S VERY WRONG HERE!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH KICKING THEIR--
LOOK!
TEACH US.
SHOW US.
GUIDE US.
EDUCATE.
DO WE... KNOCK THEM OUT TOO?
DON'T THUMP 'EM YET. MAYBE WE CAN TALK SOME SENSE INTO THEM?

YOU'RE GONNA GET IT NOW!
NO TIME FOR TALK--
HURK!
KRAK
--ONLY TIME FOR KICK!
SHOULD WE GIVE THEM A FINAL WARNING?
WE ALREADY DID.
FAIR ENOUGH.
ON ONE--
OOF!
BNK
FWIP
WAGH!
--THREE--
--TWO--
BONK
BLAP
HURK!
UNGH!

BRAK
KER-FWUMP
KRAK
WHUMP
LET'S RUMBLE!
CRACK

A dozen well-placed kicks later...
HNNNGGHS...
WELL, THAT WASN'T TOO BAD. THE ONLY THING LEFT IS...
MUST... LEARN...
EXCUSE ME? WE JUST SAVED YOU, YOU'RE FREE TO--
G-G-GUIDE US...
STAY AWAY.
SHOVE
WHOA--! THIS ISN'T GOOD... BATGIRL?
YES, TEACHER--
CHONK-VIZZ
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
NOTHING GOOD.
PSHHH
THE GAS WILL SAFELY KEEP THEM IN THE AREA... FOR NOW.
IT'S GETTING LATE, AND I DON'T WANT TO WORRY BABS--SHOULD WE STAY AND WATCH? OR DO WE CALL IT IN? CAN WE CALL IT IN?
STAY AND WATCH.
...BABS WILL UNDERSTAND.
HSSSSS

Stay and watch, they did. The strange workers eventually wandered off, and they called in the mugging from their burner phones.
They came home as quietly as they could.
CRUNCH
YOU'RE HOME.
Whether that was a good decision or not is up for debate.
I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK THAT...
...MAYBE-- GOD, I DON'T KNOW. THAT SEER, OR WHOEVER...
CLICK
LISTEN, I'M SORRY. IT'S MY FAULT WE'RE IN THIS MESS. IT'S DANGEROUS OUT THERE, NOW MORE THAN EVER BEFORE.
AND IF WE'RE GONNA BE A TEAM...
WE WERE CAREFUL. NO ONE SAW.
I KNOW YOU'RE MAD, BABS, BUT WE SAW SOME MUGGERS ROUGHING UP SOME ROAD WORKERS! THEN THE WORKERS WERE LIKE, IN SOME SORT OF TRANCE, AND--
STOP. STOP.
IT'S THREE A.M. YOU CAN GIVE ME A FULL REPORT IN THE MORNING.
I'M NOT MAD. I'M TIRED. AND A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED.
SORRY, BABS. WE'LL DO BETTER.
:SIGH:
I GOTTA DO BETTER TOO.


SEE ANYTHING COOL?
NOTHING.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THINKING ABOUT THOSE GUYS FROM TONIGHT.
MUGGERS?
NO, THE MUGGEES. IT WAS WEIRD... RIGHT? THEY WERE ACTING SO STRANGE.
I KEEP GOING OVER IT ALL. THE KILLER--THE ONE WHO'S BEEN, Y'KNOW, KILLING PEOPLE?
MM.
DO YOU THINK WHAT WE SAW TONIGHT COULD BE... CONNECTED?
STEPH...
WHAT'S UP?
LOOK.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
MOVEMENT. GRUMPY NEIGHBOR.

SOMETHING HEAVY.
OH MY GOD. CASS...
...THAT COULD BE A BODY!
OUR NEIGHBOR-- THE SERIAL KILLER?
SOME OF THE VICTIMS HAVE BEEN FOUND IN DUMPSTERS. WE MAY HAVE MOVED TO THE EPICENTER OF THE WHOLE THING!

BAAAABS!
BUMP
GAH!
WHAT? WHAT IS IT?
IT'S THE GRUMPY NEIGHBOR! WE SAW HIM DRAGGING A HUMAN-SIZED GARBAGE BAG!

WAIT. SLOW DOWN. DID YOU TWO GO OUT AGAIN?
WE SAW! THROUGH THE WINDOW.
IT LOOKED VERY HEAVY!
YOU'RE SPECULATING. WE CAN ONLY ACT IF WE HAVE EVIDENCE. UNTIL THEN, I DON'T CARE HOW GRUMPY HE IS. HE'S OUR NEIGHBOR.
BUT--
I LOVE YOU BOTH, BUT YOU'RE CLEARLY DELIRIOUS.
NOW PLEASE, GO GET SOME SLEEP. I'M BEGGING YOU.

BABS WANTS PROOF, HUH? THEN THAT'S WHAT WE'LL GET.
MASK UP, CASS.
BUT... SHE'LL KNOW.
WE CAN'T JUST SIT IDLY AND WAIT FOR THIS GUY TO STRIKE AGAIN.
WE'LL BE IN AND OUT. SIMPLE RECON STUFF, GATHER SOME INTEL.
RECON. INTEL.
COPY.
Investigations require immediate action.
Like...you gotta act swiftly before the evidence is hauled off to the landfill, or whatever.
THE DUMPSTER'S DOWN THERE. WE GRAPPLE DOWN AND TAKE A PEEK. READY?
GO.
THIS IS THE MOMENT OF TRUTH--
WATCH OUT!
WHAT IS THE OLD ADAGE? AH YES, BATGIRLS-- THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE...
TINK
SKKKSSHH

ZZZZZ...
BING!
BING
DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR ANTIBIRLS ARE?
AVENGERS
:KSHHHT: ORACLE ACTUAL, DO YOU COPY? :CHHHT:
ORACLE, ARE YOU THERE? :KSSHT:
HUH...?
I THINK...WE MIGHT HAVE MESSED UP, OVER.

YES, CALL IT IN--LET YOUR ORACLE KNOW.
THE SAINTS HAVE RISEN, AND THE MAGISTRATE WILL NEVER DIE...
TARSUS.
ASSISI.
VALENTINE.
FIDO-5.
...BUT THE BATGIRLS WILL.
DC COMICS PROUDLY PRESENTS
BATGIRLS
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER
PART 1 OF 6
BECKY CLOONAN & MICHAEL W. CONRAD STORY
JORGE CORONA ART
SARAH STERN COLORS
BECCA CAREY LETTERS
CORONA WITH STERN COVER
INHYUK LEE VARIANT COVERS
RIAN GONZALES 1:25 VARIANT COVER
DAN HIPP 1:50 VARIANT COVER
YOSHITAKA AMANO TEAM VARIANT COVER
JESSICA BERBEY ASSISTANT EDITOR
BEN ABERNATHY GROUP EDITOR
JESSICA CHEN EDITOR
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER
NEXT: THE (SIMON) SAINTS COME CRUSHING IN.

The Bat is away...
It's time for the criminals locked in Arkham Tower to play!

BATMAN DETECTIVE COMICS

SHADOWS OF THE BAT

A 12-part weekly event starting in January's *Detective Comics* #1047

Written by **MARIKO TAMAKI**

Art by **IVAN REIS** · **DANNY MIKI**
MAX RAYNOR · **AMANCAY NAHUELPAN**

Covers by **IRVIN RODRIGUEZ**

Plus the epic tale "HOUSE OF GOTHAM"
by MATTHEW ROSENBERG & FERNANDO BLANCO

DC NATION SPOTLIGHT ON

NIGHTWING

VOL. 1: LEAPING INTO THE LIGHT

INTERVIEW WITH TOM TAYLOR

Dick Grayson is back in blue! *Nightwing Vol. 1: Leaping into the Light* collects the first arc in writer Tom Taylor and artist Bruno Redondo's character-redefining run.

What makes this book a good jumping-on point?

We wanted this to be the perfect jumping-on point for any reader. This story is taking everything I love about Nightwing, and amping it up to the next level. It's showing the world why Dick Grayson is an A-lister. When the offer came to write this book, I was jumping. The appeal of Nightwing is that he's a positive character. I like characters who can inspire and do good because it's the right thing to do.

You've worked with Bruno Redondo on multiple series. What makes *Nightwing* different?

I've been working with Bruno for 11 years. He's my brother in comics. We speak the same storytelling language, and what you're seeing is Bruno nailing this character. He wants this run to stand the test of time. Everything is just beautiful, stunning, effective, and emotive. This is a book that makes me very happy every time I see a page come in.

Why is new villain Heartless such a great adversary for Dick?

We wanted someone who was the absolute antithesis of Nightwing. If Dick is the heart of the DC Universe, he needed an adversary with no heart. This character has no empathy and what he's going to do is scary. He's enhanced, which means he's very strong but also very cruel. Nightwing needs a villain who can challenge him like this.

Nightwing #87 is a very unique issue—how did you and Bruno put this together?

Issue #87 is a grand experiment in comic book storytelling. The whole issue is one continuous panel. On page one, Nightwing walks into a scene and we follow him the entire way through. There are no panel breaks. This is something we haven't seen before in comics and was incredibly difficult to choreograph. However, it was something Bruno and I have wanted to do for over a year now. Watching Bruno add to it every few days and seeing it take shape was absolutely mind-blowing. It will be exciting to open the book, cut it up, and lay out the one panel. Maybe buy two copies.

DON'T MISS

NIGHTWING VOL. 1: LEAPING INTO THE LIGHT

ON SALE IN DECEMBER!

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SON OF ULTRON